

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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INWARD.

Arrive Honolulu from Kahuku, Waiānae and Waiānae—8:36 a. m., 5:31 p. m. Arrive in Honolulu from Ewa Mill and Pearl City—17:44 a. m., 8:36 a. m., 10:38 a. m., 11:30 p. m., 4:31 p. m., 5:31 p. m., 7:30 p. m. Arrive Honolulu from Wahiawa—8:36 a. m. and 5:31 p. m.

* Daily.
† Ex. Sunday.
‡ Sunday Only.

The Haleiwa Limited, a two-hour train (only first-class tickets honored), leaves Honolulu every Sunday at 8:22 a. m.; returning, arrives in Honolulu at 10:10 p. m. The Limited stops only at Pearl City and Waiānae. G. P. DENISON. K. C. SMITH.

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(Continued)

The gambler's words rang in his ears. "I want John Gaylord," and before he knew what he was doing he had answered, "Very well; I'll give him to you," and crossed quickly to the door of his bedroom and flung it open. On the threshold he paused stockstill. The place was empty. A draft sucked through the open window, flitting with the curtain and telling the story of the trader's exit.

"If you're looking for your coat, it's here," he heard Stark say. "Get into it, and we'll go for him."

The lieutenant's mind was working fast enough now, in all conscience, and he saw with clear and fateful eyes whether he was being led, at which a sudden reckless disregard for consequences seized him. He felt a blind fury at being pulled and hauled and driven by this creature and also an unreasoning anger at Gale's defection. But it was the thought of Necla and the horrible net of evil in which this man had ensnared them both that galloped him most. He determined to finish this thing here and now.

Meade went to his bureau, took his revolver from the belt where he had hung it and came out into the other room. Stark, seeing the weapon, exclaimed:

"You don't need that. He won't resist you."

"I've decided not to take him," said Burrell.

"Decided not to take him?" shouted the other. "Have you weakened? Don't you intend to arrest that man?"

"No!" cried the soldier. "I've listened to your lies long enough. Now I'm going to stop them once for all. You're too dangerous to have around."

They faced each other silently a moment; then Stark spoke in a very quiet voice, though his eyes were glittering.

"What's the meaning of this? Are you crazy?"

"Gale was here just before you came and told me who killed your wife. I know."

"Well?"

"It's pretty late. This place is lonely. This is the simplest way."

The gambler fell to studying his antagonist, and when he did not speak Burrell continued:

"Come, brace up! I'm giving you a chance."

"But Stark shook his head.

"Don't be afraid," insisted the lieutenant. "There are no witnesses. If you get me, nobody will know, and your word is good. If not, it's much simpler than the other." Then when the gambler still made no move he insisted. "You wouldn't have me kill you like a rattlesnake?"

"You couldn't," said the older man.

"You're not that kind, and I'm not the kind to be cheated either. Listen, I've lived over forty years, and I never took less than was coming to me. I won't begin tonight."

"You'll get your share."

"Bah! You don't know what I mean. I don't want you. It's him I'm after, and when I'm done with him I'll take care of you, but I won't run any risk right now. You might put me away, there's the possibility, and I won't let you or any other man—or woman either, not even my girl—cheat me out of Gale. Put up your gun."

The soldier hesitated, then did as he was bidden, for this man knew him better than he knew himself.

"I ought to treat you like a mad dog, but I can't do it while your hands are up. I'm going to fight for John Gale, however, and you can't take him."

"I'll have his carcass hung to my ridgepole before daylight."

Stark turned to go, but paused at the door. "And you think you'll marry Necla, do you?"

"I know it."

"Is that so? Suppose you find her first."

"What do you mean? Wait!"

But his visitor was gone, leaving behind him a lover already sorely vexed and now harassed by a new and sudden apprehension. What venom the man distilled! Could it be that he had sent Necla away?

Stark traced his way back to his cabin in a ten times fiercer mood than he had come, reviling, cursing, hating. Back past the dark trading post he went, pausing to shake his clenched fist and glare out an oath between his teeth; past the door of his own saloon, which was alight and whence came the sound of revelry, through the scattered houses, where he went more by feel than by sight, up to the door of his own shack. He closed the door behind him now and looked it, for he had some thinking to do, then felt through his pockets for a match, and, striking it, bent over his lamp to adjust the wick. It flared up steady and strong at last, flooding the narrow place with its illumination. Then he straightened up and turned toward the bed to throw off his coat, when suddenly every muscle of his body leaped with an uncontrollable spasm, as if he had uncovered a deadly serpent coiled and ready to spring.

John Gale was sitting at his table, barely an arm's length away, his gray blue eyes fixed upon him and the deep reds of his heavy face set as if

glazed in terror. The large, tattooed hands were upon the table, and between them lay a naked knife.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOHN GALE'S NOVE.

IT was a headlong time of night to arouse the girl, thought Burrell as he left the barracks, but he must ally these fears that were besetting him; he must see Necla at once. The low, drifting clouds obscured what star glow there was in the heavens, and he stepped back to light a lantern.

A few moments later he stood above the squaw, who crouched on the trader's doorstep, waiting her death song into the night.

"What's wrong? Where is Necla? Where is she?" he demanded, and at last seized her roughly, facing her to the light, but Alluna only blinked owlishly at his lantern and shook her head.

"Gone away," she finally informed him and began to weep again in her despair, but he held her fiercely.

"Where has she gone? When did she go?" He shook her to quicken her reply.

"I don't know; I don't know. Long time she's gone now." She trailed off into Indian words he could not comprehend, so he pushed past her into the house to see for himself and without knocking flung Necla's door open and stepped into her chamber. Before he had swept the unfamiliar room with his eyes he knew that she had indeed gone, and gone hurriedly, for the signs of disorder betrayed a reckless haste.

"When did she go, Alluna? For God's sake, what does this mean?" he cried.

"I don't know. She come and she go, and I don't see her; maybe three, four hour ago."

"Where's Gale? He'll know. He's gone after her, eh?"

The upward glow of the lantern heightened the young man's pallor, and again the squaw broke into her sad lament.

"John Gale—he's gone away with the knife of my father. I am afraid; I am afraid."

"Did he come back here just now?"

"No. He went to the jail house, and he would not let me follow. He don't come back no more."

This was confusing, and Meade cried angrily:

"Why didn't you give the alarm? Why didn't you come to me instead of yelling your lungs out around the house?"

"He told me to wait," she said simply.

"Go find Poleon, quick!"

"He told me to wait," she repeated stolidly, and Burrell knew he was powerless to move her. He saw the image of a great terror in the woman's face. The night suddenly became heavy with the hint of unspeakable things, and he grew fearful, suspecting now that Gale had told him but a part of his story, that all the time he knew Stark's identity and that his quarry was at hand, ready for the kill, or, if not, he had learned enough while standing behind that partition. Where

was he now? Where was Necla? What part did she play in this? He gave up trying to think and fled for Stark's saloon, reasoning that where one was the other must be near, and there would surely be some word of Necla. He burst through the door. A quick glance over the place showed it empty of those he sought; but, spying Poleon Doret, he dragged him outside, inquiring breathlessly:

"Have you seen Gale?"

"No."

"Have you seen Stark? Has he been about?"

"Yes; was here, maybe two, three hour ago. Why? What for you ask?"

"There's the devil to pay. Those two have come together, and Necla is gone."

"Necla gone!" the Canadian jerked out. "What you mean by dat? Where she gone to?"

"I don't know. Nobody knows. Heaven! I'm shaking like a leaf."

"Bah! She's feel pretty bad. She's go out by herself. Dat's all right."

"I tell you something has happened to her! There's a-1 to pay! I found her clothes at the house torn to ribbons and all muddy and wet."

Poleon cried out at this.

"We've got to find her and Gale, and we haven't a minute to lose."

"Where have you look?"

"I've been to the house, but Alluna is crazy and says Gale has gone to kill Stark, as near as I can make out. Both of them were at my quarters tonight, and I'm afraid the squaw is right."

"But where's Necla?"

"We don't know. Maybe Stark has got her."

The Frenchman cursed horribly. "Have you try hees cabane?"

"No."

Without answer the Frenchman darted away, and the lieutenant sped after him through the deserted rows of log houses.

Burrell gripped his companion's arm with fingers of steel, and together they crept up to the door. But even

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Before they had gained it they heard a voice within. It was Stark's. The walls of the house were of moss-chinked logs that deadened every sound, but the door itself was of thin whipsawed pine, boards with ample cracks at top and bottom, and they heard plainly. The lieutenant leaned forward, then, with difficulty smothered an exclamation, for he heard another voice now—the voice of John Gale. The words came to him muffled, but distinct, and he raised his hand to knock when suddenly he seized Poleon, hissing into his ear:

"Listen! For God's sake, listen!"

For the first time in his tempestuous life Ben Stark lost the iron composure that had made his name a byword in the west, and at sight of his bitterest enemy, seated in the dark of his own house waiting for him he became an ordinary, nervous, frightened man. It was the utter unexpectedness of the thing that shook him, and before he could regain his balance Gale spoke:

"I've come to settle, Bennett."

"What are you doing here?" the gambler stammered.

"I was up at the soldier's place just now and heard you. I didn't want any interruptions, so I came here, where we can be alone." He paused, and when Stark made no answer continued, "Well, let's get at it." But still the other made no move. "You've had all the best of it for twenty years," Gale went on in his level voice, "but tonight I get even. I've lived for this!"

"That shot in Leg's cabin?" recalled Stark, with the light of new understanding. "You knew me then?"

"Yes."

Stark took a deep breath. "What a d—d fool I've been!"

"Your devil's magic saved you that time, but it won't stop this." The trader rose slowly, with the knife in his hand.

"You'll hang for this!" said the gambler unsteadily, at which Gale's face blazed.

"I'll!" exclaimed the trader exultingly. "You can feel it in you already, eh?"

With an effort Stark began to assemble his wits as the trader continued:

"You snickered your dirty work on me, Ben Stark, and I've carried it for fifteen years, but tonight I put you out the way you put her out. An eye for an eye!"

"I didn't kill her," said the man.

"So? The yellow is showing up at last. I knew you were a coward, but I didn't think you'd be afraid to own it to yourself."

"Look here," said Stark curiously. "do you really think I killed Merridy?"

"I know it. A man who would strike a woman would kill her—if he had the nerve."

Stark had now mastered himself and smiled.

"My hate worked better than I thought. Well, well, that made it hard for you, didn't it?" he chuckled. "I supposed, of course, you knew."

"Knew?" Gale's face showed emotion for the first time. "Knew what?"

"She killed herself."

"So help me God!"

"There was a long pause.

"Say, it's kind of funny our standing here talking about that thing, isn't it? Well, if you want to know, I came home early that night. I guess you hadn't been gone two hours. And the surprise did it more than anything else, I suppose. She hadn't prepared a story. I got suspicious, named you at random and hit the nail on the head."

Gale's face was like chalk, and his voice sounded thin and dry as he said:

"You beat her; that's why she did it."

Stark made no answer.

"The papers said the room showed a struggle."

When the other still kept quiet Gale asked:

"Didn't you?"

At this Stark flamed up defiantly.

"Well, I guess I had cause enough. No woman except her was ever untrue to me—wife or sweetheart."

"You didn't really think?"

"Think—h—! I thought so then, and

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Found some. The "Black and White" and you knew her so well too. I guess you've had some bad nights yourself, Bennett, with that always on your mind?

"I swore I'd have"—

"—and so you put her blood on my head and made me an outlaw." After an instant, "Why did you tell me this, anyhow?"

"It's our last talk, and I wanted you to know how well my hate worked."

"Well, I guess that's all," said Gale. So far they had watched each other with unwavering, unblinking eyes,

His blade flickered in the light, straining at the leath and taut in every nerve. Now, however, the trader's fingers tightened on the knife handle, and his knuckles whitened with the grip, at which Stark's right hand swept to his waist, and simultaneously Gale lunged across the table. His blade flickered in the light, and a gun spoke—once, twice, again and again. A cry arose outside the cabin; then some heavy thing crashed in through the door, bringing light with it, for with his first leap Gale had carried the lamp and the table with him, and the two had clung in the dark.

Burrell had waited an instant too long, for the men's voices had held so steady, their words had been so vital, that the flash found him unprepared; but, thrusting the lantern into Poleon's hand, he had backed off a pace and buried himself at the door. He felt to his knees inside and an instant later found himself wrestling for his life between two raging beasts. The lieutenant knew Doret must have entered; too, though he could not see him, for the lantern shed a sickly gloom over the chaos. He was locked desperately with John Gale, who flung him about and handled him like a child, fighting like an old gray wolf hoary with years and terrible in his rage. Only for the lantern's light Gale would, doubtless have sheathed his weapon in his new assailant, but the more fiercely the trader struggled the more tenaciously the soldier clung. As it was, Gale carried the lieutenant with him and struck over his head at Stark.

(To Be Continued)

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